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MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Action to increase awareness of the slow progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1990/14 of 24 May 1990, requested the Secretary-General to carry out, through the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, a world-wide educational campaign to increase awareness of the obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, 1/ in particular:

(a) Obstacles to de facto equality in political participation and decision-making;

(b) Obstacles to the advancement of women in education, employment and health, in particular in developing countries, giving special attention to problems confronted by women living in extreme poverty, rural women and women in the informal sector of the economy;

(c) Obstacles to the participation of women in the peace process.

2. The Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council at its first regular session of 1991, through the Commission on the Status of Women, on the implementation of that resolution. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

3. The request for the Department of Public Information to carry out a world-wide educational campaign to increase awareness of the obstacles encountered in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies came at a time when the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 had been approved by the General Assembly. Consequently, since no additional funding has been made available to the Department to undertake such a world-wide educational campaign, it has had to be carried out from within existing resources.

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Inevitably, this financial constraint has limited the scope and nature of the activities that could be undertaken.

4. A number of the programmes included in the programme budget for 1990-1991 have been modified in content to reflect better the obstacles to implementing the Forward-looking Strategies and some have been targeted at different audiences than was originally planned. The Department has also undertaken some additional activities. These changes to the programme budget for 1990-1991 as well as the additional activities are described below.

5. Assuming that the educational campaign is intended to be on-going, at least up until the world conference on women to be held in 1995, every effort will be made to include additional activities in the programme budgets for the bienniums 1992-1993 and 1994-1995, given the restraints of zero-growth budgeting.

6. The Department of Public Information has co-ordinated a multi-media approach to ensure the effective coverage of United Nations activities on women's issues, as well as the world-wide distribution of information materials.

7. Such an approach can be grouped into three broad areas: products, services and dissemination of information. These areas include, inter alia, printed material; film, video, radio and television; photographs and exhibits; press coverage, including press conferences; media liaison; public inquiries; special events and activities; inter-agency co-productions; collaboration with non-governmental organizations; and use of the resources of the 67 United Nations information centres and services throughout the world.

8. In its capacity as secretariat to the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC), the Department also acts as focal point for public information activities on issues related to women in general and promotes system-wide information activities on these issues.

9. The Department has created an Inter-Agency Advisory Group on Information Activities, which is chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information of the Secretariat. This Advisory Group is intended to co-ordinate and to promote inter-agency public information activities on women's issues. Its membership is composed of the New York-based representatives of United Nations bodies that have programmes related to the advancement of women. One of the joint activities of the Advisory Group is the compilation of the "United Nations calendar of women's activities" described in paragraph 15 below.

10. A focal point on the thematic issue of women was appointed by the Department in 1989, within its Communications and Project Management Division, to co-ordinate the Department's activities on women.

11. In the programme budget for 1990-1991 (A/44/6/Rev.1), 2/ the Department is expected to produce specific information material on women's issues under the thematic heading of development and also under the subprogramme of information services. Under the heading of development, the activities are as follows:

(a) Preparation of an information kit and media launch of "The State of the World's Women Report 1990" highlighting specific themes in the report through the use of feature articles, graphics, photographs, cartoons, charts in Arabic, English, French and Spanish and four local languages, as required

by United Nations information centres and services, for distribution to the media and selected non-governmental organizations;

(b) Preparation of an information kit on the impact of structural adjustment policies on women, in preparation for the thirty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, to include a booklet, pamphlet, fact sheets, feature articles and photographs, in English, French and Spanish, for distribution to the Commission, non-governmental organizations, the media, United Nations information centres and women's organizations;

(c) Production of a booklet on activities of the United Nations system concerning women's issues, in English, French and Spanish, for distribution to women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, schools, the media and United Nations information centres; in addition, a German version of pamphlets and features on the subject will be produced.

12. In response to the request from the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/14, the Department has decided to modify these activities. As regards item (a) in paragraph 11 above, a booklet instead of an information kit will be produced so as to be more useful to non-governmental organizations and educational institutions. The working title is "Women in the 1990s". The booklet will emphasize the obstacles encountered in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies. It will deal with the areas of political participation and decision-making, health, education, employment, legal literacy and the participation of women in the peace process. Attention will also be given to the problems of women living in extreme poverty, rural women and women in the informal sector of the economy. The booklet will be produced in English, French and Spanish for free distribution through the United Nations information centres and services and also as a sales item. Each chapter may also be produced as a feature article as part of the Department's continuing "United Nations Focus" feature series distributed to the media. The intended publication date and media launch of the booklet is 3 September 1991, the tenth anniversary of the date when the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women entered into force.

13. Item (b) in paragraph 11 above has also been modified. Instead of producing a separate kit on the impact of structural adjustment policies on women, the Department has included material on the subject in its other publications. For example, a chapter entitled "Women in developing countries: invisible victims of the economic crisis" was included in a booklet produced by the Department on the external debt crisis, entitled "Debt: a crisis for development" (DPI/1032). An information kit on international economic co-operation, produced by the Department for the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session, held in 1990, included a "backgrounder" on the feminization of poverty (DPI/1051G). In addition, chapters on the impact of the economic crisis on women were included in the Department's recent publication entitled "The world economy: a global challenge" (DPI/1033).

14. In addition, a series of feature articles and backgrounders were produced in English, French and Spanish, for use by the news media world-wide. Some of the titles were: "UN acts for women's rights" (DPI/1064) on the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its ninth session held in 1990; "UN women's Commission seeks to re-energize Nairobi Strategies" (DPI/1063) on the work of the Commission on the Status of Women at

its thirty-fourth session held in 1990; "Women and the environment: sustaining our common future" (DPI/1050); and "Refugee women" (DPI/1114). Furthermore, the Department's information kit on discrimination against women (DPI/988) was reprinted and enhanced with additional material (see paragraph 20 below).

15. In place of item (c) in paragraph 11 above, the Department is producing a "United Nations calendar of women's activities, 1991", to be launched in conjunction with International Women's Day, 8 March 1991. This poster-sized wall calendar highlights selected events, conferences, symposia, expert group meetings and training modules on women that are being convened by United Nations organizations during 1991. The reverse side of the calendar features a brief history of the work of the United Nations for women over the last 50 years, an enumeration of the priority themes for the period 1991-1996 (as designated by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/15, annex), and a select list of publications on women issued by bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations. The calendar includes addresses for all contributing organizations so that users can request additional material; 10,000 English language copies will be distributed throughout the world. The calendar may become an annual publication.

16. Also, in the proposed programme budget for 1990-1991 (A/44/6/Rev.1), under the subprogramme information services, the Department is to produce "Women", a special series of weekly radio programmes in English and monthly radio programmes in French and Spanish, on various issues related to the status and advancement of women. The programmes are distributed on tape and cassette to over 300 radio organizations world-wide.

17. In 1990, the Department produced a total of 32 English-language radio programmes on a variety of topics, including health ("Women and AIDS", "Female circumcision"), employment ("Negative effects of the international economic situation"), education ("Women and literacy"), political participation ("Women and politics"), and corollaries to the peace theme ("Women and crime", "Women prisoners"). Twelve radio programmes on women were produced in Arabic, French and Spanish. Special programmes are planned for 1991 to highlight International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 89 concerning Night Work of Women Employed in Industry and the Interregional Consultation on Women in Public Life to be held at Vienna in September 1991.

18. Many additional activities of the Department, such as those outlined in paragraph 7 above, also include coverage of women's issues and are funded under other sections of the budget.

19. In addition, the Department includes issues related to women in its programmes on other themes such as human rights, aging, disability and other social development issues.

20. In December 1989, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Department launched a media kit on discrimination against women. The kit focused on the need to implement the provisions of the Convention. It included the full text of the Convention, a list of countries that had ratified the Convention, backgrounders on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as feature articles and graphs on some of the major areas of concern, including domestic violence, political participation and women and the economic crisis. In addition, the kit included a message from the Secretary-General and a brochure

entitled "End discrimination against women" (DPI/995). The kit was distributed globally to the media, women's organizations, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations and the public as follows: 5,000 copies in English and 2,000 each in French and Spanish. Owing to the large demand, the English version of the kit was reprinted in September 1990, enhanced with updated material and the inclusion of the new feature articles on literacy, the feminization of poverty, and women and the environment.

21. In response to the first five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies undertaken by the Commission on the Status of Women, the Department undertook additional information activities to publicize a number of the obstacles identified in the areas of literacy, employment, health and sex stereotyping. Many of these activities were undertaken to coincide with the observance of international anniversaries or days, thus maximizing their impact. Every effort was made to co-ordinate the content and timing of these activities with those of the Division for the Advancement of Women, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV/CSDHA), the substantive unit on women's issues, as well as with those of other specialized agencies of the United Nations that have programmes related to women. Details of specific projects are described below.

22. The theme for International Women's Day, 1990, was "Women and the environment". Accordingly, the Department produced and distributed a poster (DPI/1037) in six colours, entitled "Women and the environment: sustaining our common future", in English, French and Spanish, as well as the feature article of the same title mentioned in paragraph 14 above. The Day was celebrated at United Nations Headquarters with an address given to the community of non-governmental organizations by the Special Adviser to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme. Such briefings for non-governmental organizations are a regular weekly activity undertaken by the Department; about 200 New York-based representatives of international non-governmental organizations regularly attend them. Altogether, 1,100 non-governmental organizations world-wide are accredited by the Department. In 1990, several of the briefings dealt with issues related to women.

23. Reflecting one of the priority themes for consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women, at its thirty-fifth session, the focus for International Women's Day, 1991, will be refugee women. A fact sheet on refugee women will be produced in English, French and Spanish, for world-wide dissemination in conjunction with the Day. United Nations information centres and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) offices world-wide are being encouraged by the Department to plan events around the theme of refugee women. In New York, an event to be held on 7 March entitled "Making women count in the 1990s" will commemorate the Day. Organized by the Department in co-operation with an inter-agency steering committee, the event will tackle the issues of political participation, women and work, health and refugee women.

24. International Literacy Year, 1990, provided an appropriate opportunity to address the subject of women and education. On the occasion of International Literacy Day, 8 September 1990, the Department produced a feature article entitled "Literacy: tool for empowering women" (DPI/1075), in English, French and Spanish, which was distributed world-wide to the media. A 27-minute documentary video entitled "Key to freedom: women and literacy" was produced by the Department in English, French and Spanish in co-operation with the Division for the Advancement of Women (UNOV/CSDHA), the United Nations Children's Fund,

the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund, ILO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Health Organization (WHO). Footage for the video was shot in both developing and developed countries.

25. The theme for World AIDS Day, 1990, was "Women and AIDS". The Department collaborated with WHO to organize events in connection with the Day. On 30 November 1990, two panel discussions were held at United Nations Headquarters, one on AIDS prevention through education and the other on promoting compassion, solidarity and understanding about AIDS. Keynote speakers were Dr. Antonia Novello, Surgeon-General of the United States of America, and Dr. Mathilde Krim, co-founder of the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AMFAR). A feature article entitled "Women and AIDS" (DPI/996) was prepared, which was distributed to the media world-wide in English, French and Spanish.

26. The Department is collaborating with the Senior Women's Advisory Group on Sustainable Development to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme in preparing for the Global Assembly on Women and the Environment: Partners in Life, to be held at Miami, Florida, in November 1991. Fact sheets, media programmes and round-table discussions are being planned to publicize the crucial role of women in solving environmental problems, particularly in the developing world. Health aspects will be stressed as they relate to the accessibility of water, the management of waste, energy and environmentally friendly technologies.

27. The Department sponsored a six-week training programme for 16 broadcasters and journalists from developing countries, which was held at United Nations Headquarters in September and October 1990. As part of this programme, the journalists received briefings on various aspects of the work of the United Nations, including its work for women. A special seminar entitled "Media, stereotyping and women" was held with the participants to discuss sex stereotyping in the media.

28. In 1990, the Department continued to provide full press, radio and television coverage of the proceedings of all United Nations intergovernmental bodies concerned with women's issues, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Commission on the Status of Women.

29. Prior to the thirty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information hosted a media breakfast for 20 senior editors and correspondents of selected newspapers and women's magazines. The Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna briefed the participants on the work of the Commission, in particular its first review of the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies. After the session, additional information on the results of the review and appraisal was sent to the participants.

30. The Department's regular publications, such as Africa Recovery, Development Forum, Notes for Speaker, UN Chronicle and Yearbook of the United Nations have devoted numerous articles to women's issues. The two-monthly Development Forum, produced in English, French and Spanish, contains a regular page on women in addition to a number of related articles. An article on women and AIDS was published in the December 1990 issue of Development Forum. In 1991, the Africa Recovery programme of the Department will produce two briefing papers, one on population issues in Africa and one dealing with women, agriculture and income-generating activities in Africa.

31. The Department's regular television programme UN in Action and its programmes produced for CNN World Report, which are seen weekly in 120 countries, have included coverage of women's issues. World Chronicle, the Department's weekly half-hour interview programme, which is broadcast by over 150 television stations in the United States, also has included coverage of issues related to the advancement of women. For example, a recent programme featured a former Director of Information of UNDP, who spoke on the broad issue of discrimination against women. UN in Action and World Chronicle are also regularly used by United Nations information centres, especially in Brazil, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines and Trinidad and Tobago.

32. Obstacles affecting women in the workplace was the subject of a 27-minute film and video entitled "Making their way", which the Department filmed in Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Lesotho, Norway and Singapore with women from different economic and social backgrounds. Available in English, it will be produced in French, Spanish and Arabic during 1991.

33. Exploratory discussions are being undertaken by the Department on the production of a video dealing with issues related to the employment of women who are heads of household. The Department is co-ordinating, in co-operation with the Canadian International Development Agency, the production of an international television series entitled Agenda for a Small Planet IV: Blueprint for the Future - Challenge and Response. The series will focus on the pressing challenges of the twenty-first century, including some related to women. It will be completed and launched in late 1991.

34. In 1990, the Department's Public Inquiries Unit at Headquarters received some 607 requests for information on women and related issues. The focal point on women's issues in the Communications and Project Management Division received an average of 20 requests a month for information or publications on women. The Department's Public Services Section at Headquarters arranged for 15 in-house briefings on women with an audience of 542 people, as well as two outside addresses to a total of about 1,200 people. In addition, information on United Nations work for women was made available to a total of about 500,000 visitors to United Nations Headquarters in 1990.

35. The United Nation information centres and services also undertake activities to publicize and promote issues concerned with the advancement of women, in addition to using the information material produced at Headquarters. For example, on International Women's Day, 8 March, most information centres have special activities, often organized in co-operation with local non-governmental organizations and/or the Government. Some of the activities undertaken by the centres include exhibits, seminars, television and radio interviews, poster competitions, round-table discussions, debates, film shows, press conferences, briefings for non-governmental organizations, talks for schoolchildren, production of newsletters in local languages and dissemination of information to the media.

36. In addition to the work of the Department, some substantive offices of the Secretariat also produce information material on the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies. These activities are taken into account by the Department in planning and co-ordinating the world-wide educational campaign on the Forward-looking Strategies.

37. The Division for the Advancement of Women (UNOV/CSDHA) issues Women 2000, a magazine of about 20 pages, published three times a year, on subjects related to the Forward-looking Strategies. One issue in 1990 covered the first five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies carried out by the Commission on the Status of Women. The Division also issues Women News, a four-page newsletter, published eight times a year, which provides information on United Nations activities related to the advancement of women. Both publications are issued in English, French and Spanish.

38. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women issues INSTRAW News, a biannual illustrated magazine on women and development published in English, French and Spanish.

39. Under the auspices of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service at the United Nations Office at Geneva, the JUNIC/NGO Sub-group on Women and Development produces a series of development educational kits on women and development. Kits issued in 1990 and planned for 1991 include women and the world economic crisis; women and violence; women, literacy and sustainable development; refugee women; and women and health.

Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6.